

# HALOCHOSCOPE



## This week's question:

Someone wants to wear *tzitzis* while exercising. Since the *tzitzis* get sweaty, he would like to wear a separate garment just for the exercise. Does he recite a new *brocha* when he wears the separate garment, and when he gets back into his regular garment later?

## The issues:

- A) The *mitzvah* to wear a garment with *tzitzis*
  - B) The *brocha*
  - C) *Hesesh da'as*, when a break in the *mitzvah* requires a new *brocha*
- A) *The mitzvah of tzitzis*

*Tzitzis* is a fundamental *mitzvah*. It is considered equal in stature to all other *mitzvos* in the Torah. It was worth redeeming the Jews from Egypt for this *mitzvah* alone. The color of the *tzitzis* (*techailess*) is meant to symbolize Hashem's throne of glory. Some say that the Hebrew root of the word *tzitzis* is the same as that of the word for peeking. When one wears *tzitzis*, Hashem is watching over him from His throne.

The explanations for why the *mitzvah* is so fundamental touch on esoteric discussions on the purposes of Creation. One part of this is important for proper understanding of the performance of the *mitzvah*. The Torah rarely gives reasons for a *mitzvah*. When reasons are found they are not necessarily the intent one must have when performing the *mitzvah*. One has in mind to fulfill the will of Hashem, whatever that may be. One should not perform a *mitzvah* for ulterior motives. Though *poskim* and those who count the *mitzvos* often offer reasons for them, these can be seen as one of many possible reasons, or as a flavor of the *mitzvah*, but not its purpose. Salt is put in bread to make it palatable. No-one would eat the bread for its salt. In the same way, the *taam*, reason or taste, of a *mitzvah* is to make it palatable, but not its purpose. Some maintain that all *mitzvos* refine the person. We might not know the true purpose and meaning of a *mitzvah*, but we can see the refinement coming from that particular action. If one performed *mitzvos* solely for the reasons given, he might adjust *halacha* accordingly. This could lead to wrong conclusions and rulings, like those of *Korach*. [He thought a house full of *seforim* did not require *mezuzah*, and a garment of *techailess* should not require *tzitzis*.]

*Tzitzis* is different. Three *mitzvos*, *tefilin*, *tzitzis* and *sukah*, include the word *lema'an* in their commandment. This word means 'in order that'. It implies that the *mitzvah* has the purpose referred to. For these *mitzvos* it is essential to have the intent to fulfill them for their specified purpose. Many *poskim* say that without this intent one still gets credit for fulfilling the *mitzvah*, but that the ideal intent tells us about the *mitzvah*.

The Torah says: You shall see them. You shall remember all the *mitzvos* of Hashem, and perform them. You shall not wander after [the temptations of] your heart and [the attractions of] your eyes, that you stray after them. IN ORDER THAT you remember and

perform all My *mitzvos*, and you shall become holy to your G-d.

Seeing leads to remembering and in turn, to performing. By looking at the *tzitzis* we prevent transgressions and feel the urgency of performing the other *mitzvos*. This is an inherent quality invested by Hashem, or knowledge of the obligation helps us remind ourselves of this when seeing them. Why are some not afforded the protection? One answer is that it works for those who admit that they need guidance.

*Tzitzis* only applies by day. It only applies if one wears the four-cornered garment. One may wear a three cornered garment, or a round edged garment without *tzitzis*. Thus, one need not wear *tzitzis* and he would not be in violation. Why is this the case with such a fundamental *mitzvah*? Its very fundamentalism is not automatic, but requires thought.

Though the *mitzvah* does not require one to wear the garment, the Talmud relates how an angel appeared to a sage warning him to wear it at all times. The Talmud also considers one who does not wear *tzitzis* one of the six types who are excommunicated by Heaven. Therefore, it is customary to wear a *talis katan*, small garment with *tzitzis*, at all times – to remind us of all the other *mitzvos*. Ideally, it is worn in a way that it is openly visible. However, when one is concerned that he will be scoffed by gentiles, who might also deride the *mitzvah* and Hashem, he should conceal them.

While one is not obliged to wear them at night, should he wear them anyhow? It would be a good reminder of the other *mitzvos*. After all, by day one is also not required, but we do so anyhow? Another issue arises. It is forbidden to sleep or enter a rest-room wearing *tefillin*. This is an aspect of their sanctity. It is permitted to enter a rest-room wearing *tzitzis*. However, the poskim forbid entering wearing a *talis gadol*, worn specially for *davening*. The issue is *bizuy mitzvah*, showing disrespect for a *mitzvah*. *Tzitzis* have no intrinsic sanctity, but they are used solely to perform a *mitzvah*. One treats them with respect. This is learned from the *mitzvah* to cover the blood of a slaughtered animal. One should not feel that *mitzvos* are to be taken lightly. Sleeping while wearing a *talis katan* could raise the same issue. The poskim generally conclude that one may sleep with the *talis katan*. Some have the practice to specially sleep with it on, based on *kabalah*. No *brocha* is recited when donning them by night. Generally, one should not wear a *talis gadol* by night. One should actually remove it when night falls. In one view, one removes a *talis katan* as well. However, since it is often under clothing, this is not followed.

*Bizuy mitzvah* is raised in connection to other matters. Using the garment, and certainly the *tzitzis* themselves for a mundane use, is forbidden. This applies even after the *talis* is worn and the *tzitzis* removed. It must be disposed of respectfully. However, some permit a mundane use with a *talis katan*, even with its *tzitzis* attached. A use that is really disrespectful would never be permitted. The poskim discuss giving the garment to a gentile laundress (unless the *tzitzis* are first untied), and forbid letting the *tzitzis* drag along the ground. Even after the *tzitzis* have been detached, one may not make the cloth into underpants. Since sleeping does not involve a specific disrespectful activity, it is permitted with a *talis katan*. However, since it is worn specifically for the *mitzvah*, some suggest refraining from wearing it while sleeping. Some dedicate a separate garment for sleep. The poskim discuss whether a *talis katan* may be worn directly on the skin. The perspiration that always forms could render this a disrespectful manner of wearing. Based on this, one faces a quandary when doing any perspiring activity, such as baking *matzos*,

erecting a *sukah*, or on a more mundane level, working out. On the one hand, one wants to wear *tzitzis* at all times. On the other hand, they will inevitably become dirty and sweaty. If the garment is worn over one's inner clothing, it will be protected from the sweat, but could get dragged around. In addition, one does not want to soil his regular garment. The solution seems to be to wear a special garment for the activity, bearing in mind that it could get dirty. As a special garment for this use, one could make it such that the *bizuy mitzvah* will be minimized. This way, there will be no question of a disrespectful activity. [See Shelach 15:38 etc., (R. Bachayc, Darash Moshe, Meshech Chochma,) commentaries. Psachim 113b Menachos 38a 44a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 8:1 5 8 11 17 (MB Yeshuas Yaakov) 19:1 21:1-4 (MB Kaf Hachaim) 24:1, etc., commentaries.]

### **B) The brocha**

The *brocha* on *tzitzis* is a regular *bircas hamitzvah*, blessing before performing the *mitzvah*. We have already discussed some unique aspects of this *mitzvah*. It is not compulsory. It does not apply to the garment, but to the person wearing it. Therefore, one does not recite a *brocha* upon tying the *tzitzis*. It is even questionable whether the wearing is an active *mitzvah*. One may not wear a four-cornered garment without *tzitzis*, but is there a *mitzvah* to wear one with the *tzitzis*, or is it an admirable thing? What exactly would the *mitzvah* be, to wear the garment, or to put it on? When would the *brocha* be recited, when wearing it, or before putting it on? What would the language of the *brocha* be, the *mitzvah* to wear, to put on, or 'the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*', plain and simple?

The general rule is that one recites a *brocha* before the performance of a *mitzvah*, except in specific cases where one does so after having begun the performance. However, certain *mitzvos* are a continuous performance, rather than a single activity. In these cases, one could still recite the *brocha* after having begun. Nonetheless, if the *brocha's* language implies that one is doing an activity, that has already taken place, one could not recite it afterwards. The consensus is that the *brocha* on a *talis gadol* is *lehisataif*, to wrap oneself in the *tzitzis*, i.e., the *talis* with the *tzitzis* on it. This would be recited immediately before wrapping the *talis* around oneself. If one forgot, he could still recite it later, and then adjust the *talis*, as though he is 're-wrapping' himself. Usually, one would not wrap himself with a *talis katan*. Therefore, reciting this *brocha* on it is problematic. Some poskim say that one may recite a *brocha* on a *talis katan*, that simple mentions the *mitzvah*. Others say that one should wrap himself and recite the regular *brocha*. If one wears a *talis gadol* for *tefillah*, he may recite the *brocha* on the *talis gadol* and have in mind his *talis katan*, that he is already wearing. When he dons the *talis katan*, he has in mind that he will recite the *brocha* later. [See Brochos 14b, Yerushalmi Brochos 9:3, Psachim 7b etc., Menachos 42a-b, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 8:1 3 5 6 10 12, commentaries.]

### **C) Hesech da'as**

The idea that one may recite one *brocha* for a number of garments can apply in various situations. We mentioned one who is already wearing a *talis katan* when he recites the *brocha* on his *talis gadol*. What if he plans to wear a number of garments with *tzitzis*, and recites a *brocha* on the first? Is there a difference whether he will be wearing one of them all the time or not (such as in our case, where there is a gap between them)? In general, one must avoid reciting unnecessary *brochos*.

Basically, a single *brocha* can continue working for multiple *mitzvos*. However, one

may not be *masiach da'as* between the performances of the *mitzvos*. This means that one must be able to consider the *brocha* connected to the act of performing the *mitzvah* later. It would then be like a meal, where the *brocha* at the beginning works for the whole meal. Doing something else, such as conversing between the two acts, can break the *brocha* apart from the second act. A time lapse can also be considered a break. The absence of intent for the second *mitzvah* can be considered a separation. To avoid this, one could have in mind when reciting the *brocha* at the beginning, that it should work for later acts. For many other types of *mitzvah*, this might not be sufficient. A *mitzvah* is a single act and the acts are separated in time. For *tzitzis* it can work more easily. The *mitzvah* is more about the state of wearing. As long as one is still wearing the original garment, he can claim to be in the middle of his performance. Accordingly, intent helps if one is still wearing the original garment.

The absence of intent would seem to be *hesech da'as*. However, there is a condition called *stama*, the standard or typical mindset. Since one normally would be wearing the other garments, *stama* makes the intent. This works when one has all the garments in front of him. Some say it also works when one has a standard order of doing things. One's behavior can also affect the *stama*. Thus, if it is clear from one's situation that he intends to continue with the *mitzvah*, it should not be considered *hesech da'as*. Two cases in particular are debated, that both relate to our case. If one wears more than one garment, but removes one before donning the second, some say he needs a second *brocha*. If one removes his *talis* temporarily, and does not have on a *talis katan*, some say he requires a new *brocha* when putting his *talis* back on. In both of these situations we follow the opinion that only considers this *hesech da'as* in a *stama* case. If one did have intent to continue the *mitzvah*, he need not make a new *brocha*. By this reasoning, in our case, too, one should not need a new *brocha*. As long as one has intent in the morning to exempt any garments he will wear that day, there is no *hesech da'as*. We need to combine both leniencies. In one case, both garments are being worn, apparently, right after the *brocha*. In the other, the same garment is worn after being removed for a short while. Nonetheless, the logic applies to our case, where a new garment is worn later, between the two times the first garment is worn. [See Tur, Sh Ar OC 8:8 12 14-15, commentaries.]

*On the Parsha ... [Avraham] offered [the ram] as an olah, instead of his son ... [22:13] On each aspect of the service Avraham said "let this be as though I were doping it to my son!" [Rashi] Perhaps, had the Torah not reiterated that the ram was offered instead of his son, we could think that it was offered as a separate offering. Since Avraham had interrupted his service with "Hineni!" and the entire dialog, then ran off to catch the ram, there was hesech da'as between the offerings. One could not be connected to the other. Since Avraham had in mind to connect them, and his interruptions were for the performance of his mitzvah, they did not constitute hesech da'as. The Torah considers the ram 'instead of his son' – it was like one olah. All the intentions and preparations for offering his son are attributed to the ram offering.*

♣ In honor and in memory of my mother, Yitela bas R. Shimon a"t, Henriette Silver. ♣

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